

# Chapter 1      Proposed Project

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## 1.1 Introduction

The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), propose to improve west-east transportation in western Riverside County between Interstate 215 (I-215) in the west and State Route 79 (SR-79) in the east. The proposed project will construct a new freeway, known as the Mid County Parkway (MCP), which will provide a direct and continuous route connecting major population/employment centers as identified in the Land Use Element of the County of Riverside (County) General Plan and the General Plans of the cities of Perris and San Jacinto, a distance of approximately 16 miles (mi). The MCP project's regional location is shown in Figure 1.1.1.

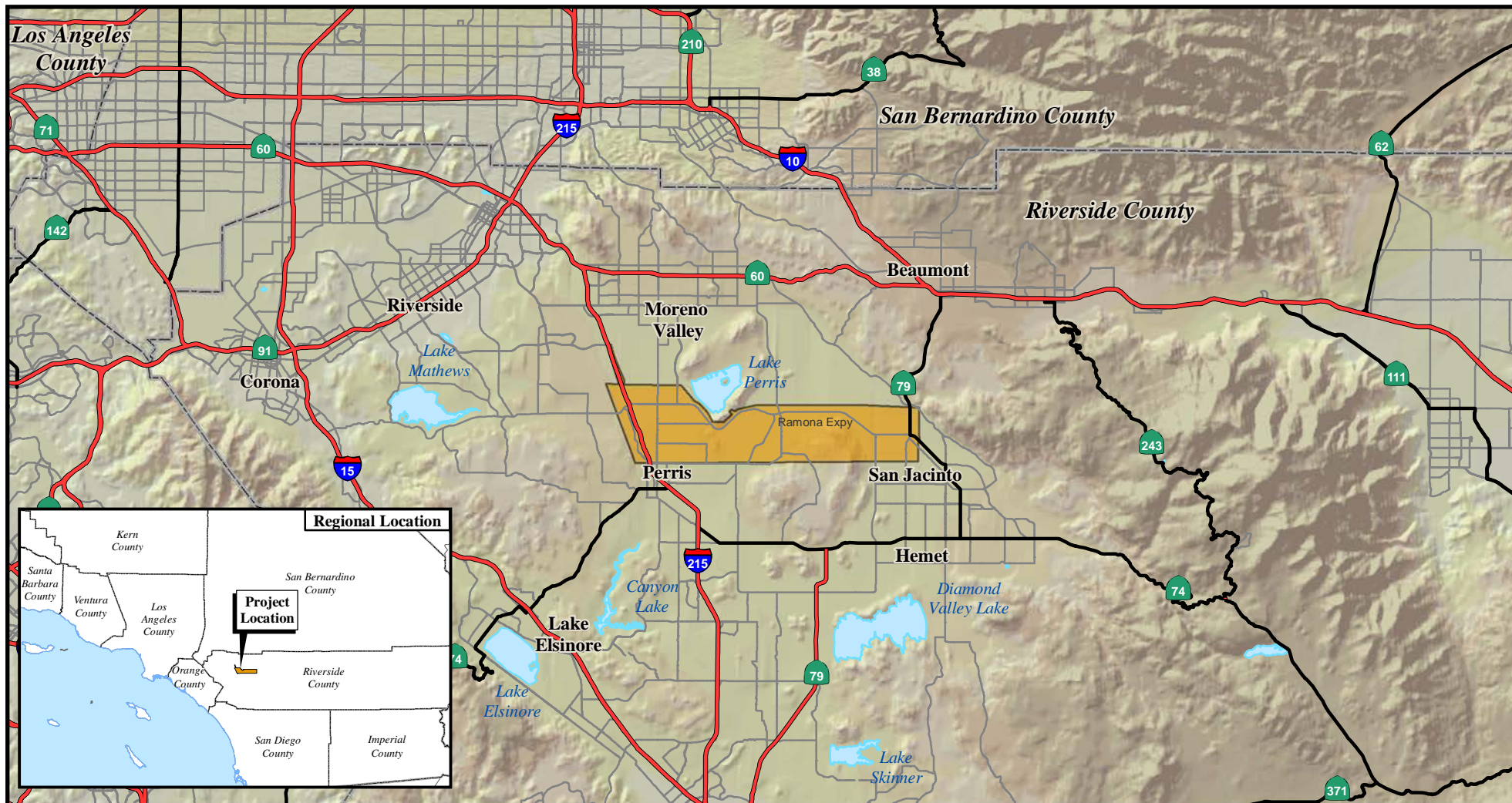
RCTC is the project proponent and the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has adopted guidelines for implementing the CEQA. FHWA is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in cooperation with Caltrans. Caltrans may also become the owner/operator of the MCP if it is designated as a State Route. RCTC, Caltrans, and FHWA are working in close collaboration with United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)<sup>1</sup> in the development of Purpose and Need and the Alternatives for the MCP project.

As described in detail in Section 1.2, Background, the MCP project evolved from an earlier project planning effort conducted by RCTC, FHWA, and Caltrans known as the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP). CETAP included a study of a new west-east transportation corridor in western Riverside County known as the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor. A Draft

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<sup>1</sup> The name of the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) was changed to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) after the circulation of the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS. References in this Final EIR/EIS to the California Department of Fish and Game or CDFG should be interpreted to mean the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or CDFW.

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# LEGEND

Mid County Parkway Study Area

FIGURE 1.1.1

SOURCE: ESRI (2008); TBM (2010), Jacobs Engineering (02/2011)



0 3.75 7.5 MILES

## Regional Location

08-RIV-MCP PM 0.0/16.3; 08-RIV-215 PM 28.0/34.3  
EA 08-0F3200 (PN 0800000125)



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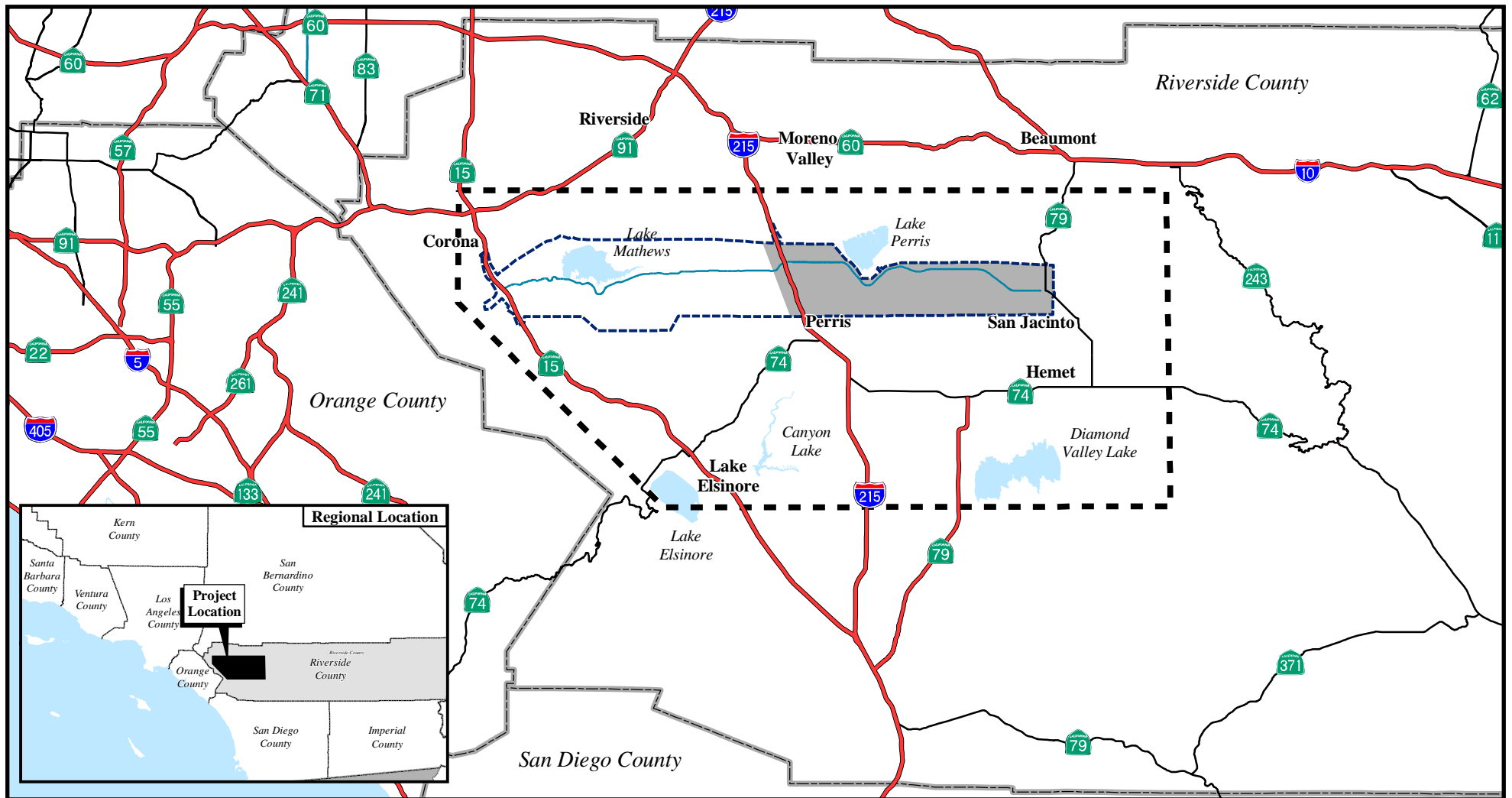
Tier 1 EIS/EIR was prepared to evaluate various west-east transportation corridor alternatives, including one that later became the MCP project. Although the document prepared for the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor was a Tier 1 EIS/EIR, this EIR/EIS for the MCP project does not “tier off” the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Draft Tier 1 EIS/EIR pursuant to 40 CFR 150.28 of the Council on Environmental Quality’s Regulations for implementing NEPA or Section 15152 of the CEQA Guidelines. This is because a Final Tier 1 EIS/EIR was not completed for the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor, and all of the data and analyses contained in the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Draft Tier 1 EIS/EIR needed to be updated for the analysis of the MCP Alternatives.

## 1.2 Background

The MCP project was identified as a key west-east regional transportation corridor as a result of several years of comprehensive land use and transportation planning in Riverside County through the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP). The RCIP was an unprecedented, multiyear planning effort to simultaneously prepare environmental, transportation, housing, and development guidelines for Riverside County for the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Riverside County is one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. The purpose of the RCIP was to address the planning, environmental, and transportation issues that would result from the anticipated doubling of population in Riverside County, from 1.5 million residents currently to approximately 3.3 million by 2025. The RCIP included three components: (1) a new General Plan for Riverside County, adopted in October 2003; (2) a Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) for western Riverside County (approved in June 2004); and (3) the CETAP. CETAP study efforts were jointly undertaken by the RCTC and the County of Riverside as a part of the RCIP. CETAP included the study of two intercounty corridors (Riverside County to Orange County and Riverside County to San Bernardino County) and two intracounty transportation corridors (a north-south and a west-east corridor in western Riverside County). Tier 1 analyses and environmental documents were initiated for the two intracounty corridors in fall 2000: a north-south corridor referred to as Winchester to Temecula, and a west-east corridor referred to as the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor. The purpose of the Tier 1 efforts was to select preferred alternatives in order to preserve needed right of way.

The Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor is shown in Figure 1.2.1. The agencies that participated in the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor study process

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# LEGEND

- Previous Mid County Parkway Study Area - 2004
- Mid County Parkway Study Area - 2011
- Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Study Area

FIGURE 1.2.1

SOURCE: ESRI (2006); TBM (2006); Jacobs Engineering (02/2011)



0 4 8 MILES

## Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Study Area

08-RIV-MCP PM 0.0/16.3; 08-RIV-215 PM 28.0/34.3  
EA 08-OF3200 (PN 0800000125)



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developed the following purpose of the proposed action in the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor: “. . . to provide multimodal transportation improvements that will help alleviate future traffic demands and congestion and improve the east-west movement of people and goods across western Riverside County.”<sup>1</sup> After a Draft Tier 1 Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) was completed for the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor and circulated for public review in 2002 with a suite of 14 “build” alternatives, the RCTC Board accepted a staff recommendation in June 2003 to proceed with the accelerated preparation of a project-level environmental document for a west-east alternative that would generally considered to have an impact if the level of service with the project is LOS F, but the project is expected to improve traffic operations if the volume of traffic added by the project is minimal. Minimal is defined by the thresholds used to determine whether a project traffic increase is substantial when both the No Build and Build traffic follow the existing alignment of Cajalco Road and Ramona Expressway, known as the MCP project. Engineering and environmental studies were initiated in 2004 for the MCP project, a proposed 32 mi facility between Interstate 15 (I-15) and SR-79, and in September 2007 the RCTC Board selected a Locally Preferred Alternative (Alternative 9 Temescal Wash Design Variation) for the MCP project. In October 2008, the Draft EIR/EIS for the MCP project was circulated for a 90-day public review period. During this time, six public meetings/hearings were held and RCTC accepted public comments for the record at all of these meetings, along with comments via the MCP project website and email. Over 3,100 comments were received from 50 public agencies and organizations, 10 large property owners, 240 individuals, and a form letter (opposing the project because of the environmental effects of the project including loss of open space, wildlife habitat, streams and riparian resources; residential sprawl; and automobile air emissions) from over 1,100 individuals nationwide.

The following two key themes emerged in the public review comments:

1. Concern about the cost and timing of available funds for the project. Many comments noted that, given the current economy and difficulty in securing funding for the entire project, limited financial resources should be focused on areas of greatest need.

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<sup>1</sup> Draft EIS/EIR for the Riverside County Integrated Project, Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore Corridor, July 2002.

2. Although the public comments raised concerns about many aspects of the project throughout its entire length, many comments suggested that making improvements to existing facilities rather than building the MCP facility would be a better expenditure of public funding in the western portion of the project area between I-15 and I-215. In this area, improving existing facilities, such as Cajalco Road, instead of building the MCP facility would minimize impacts to the rural communities of Gavilan Hills and Lake Mathews Estates as well as existing habitat reserves. Impacts to rural communities and existing habitat reserves were two major concerns raised in the public comments.

To address the concerns identified above, in spring 2009, RCTC as the lead agency under CEQA, FHWA as the lead agency under NEPA, in cooperation with Caltrans, developed an approach for completing the EIR/EIS process for the project. This approach modified the MCP project limits from 32 mi (I-15 to SR-79) to 16 mi (I-215 to SR-79) in order to focus transportation funding where the need is the greatest, between I-215 to SR-79, near existing facilities (i.e., Ramona Expressway<sup>1</sup>). This approach also included preparation of a Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS that would revise the project purpose statement and modify the project alternatives.<sup>2</sup> RCTC recognizes that while the need for transportation improvements still exists between I-15 and I-215, the Riverside County Transportation Department's proposed widening improvements to Cajalco Road will alleviate a portion of that need. The greatest near-term need for west-east transportation improvements is east of I-215, even with the planned improvements along existing Ramona Expressway; see Section 1.3.2.1. Therefore, the project purpose for the modified MCP project focuses on the need for transportation improvements between I-215 and SR-79. As discussed later in Section 1.3.1, I-215 and SR-79 provide logical termini for the MCP project, and the project has independent utility even if no additional transportation improvements are made in the area. This approach for completing the EIR/EIS process for the modified MCP project was reviewed with the federal and State resource and regulatory agencies involved in the project (USACE, EPA, USFWS, and CDFW).

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<sup>1</sup> Ramona Expressway exists today between I-215 and SR-79 as a two- to six-lane arterial highway with numerous intersections and driveways for local property access.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 2, Project Description and Alternatives, of this EIR/EIS for additional details on the project alternatives.

Fundamental to the modification of the MCP project purpose statement and alternatives is the tenet that no improvements between I-15 and I-215 are planned, designed, or intended to be implemented as part of the MCP project. The distinct transportation needs between I-15 and I-215 will be addressed by the Riverside County Transportation Department's General Plan roadway improvements for Cajalco Road. The Cajalco Road improvement project is undergoing a separate environmental review process with the Riverside County Transportation Department acting as the lead agency. The Cajalco Road improvements are analyzed in the MCP cumulative impacts assessment using the most current information available from the County (see Section 3.25, Cumulative Impacts, of this Final EIR/EIS for additional detail). A CETAP corridor between I-15 and I-215 (Project ID 3C01MA01) remains in the financially constrained part of the SCAG 2012 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) so as to not preclude consideration of transportation improvements to address future needs beyond those being addressed by the Cajalco Road improvements.

On July 8, 2009, the RCTC Board formally took action to refocus the MCP project between I-215 and SR-79. As a result of the RCTC's Board action, a Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS was prepared and circulated for public review in January 2013. The public and agency comments previously submitted for the October 2008 Draft EIR/EIS will be included in the MCP Administrative Record, but no formal responses to those comments were prepared consistent with Section 15088.5(f)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines. However, any comments on the October 2008 Draft EIR/EIS applicable to the modified MCP project were considered in the preparation of the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS.

RCTC and the MCP project team worked closely with FHWA and Caltrans to develop the modified alternatives that were evaluated in the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS in response to RCTC's Board action in July 2009. The following summarizes the main changes from the Build Alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIR/EIS and the modified Build Alternatives evaluated in the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS:

- The project limits for the Build Alternatives were changed to I-215 in the west and SR-79 in the east. The segment of the original Build Alternatives west of I-215 to I-15 is no longer under consideration as part of the MCP project.
- The horizontal alignment for Alternative 9 Modified between Perris Boulevard in the west and the Perris Valley Storm Drain in the east through the City of Perris was shifted approximately 1,000 feet north to avoid Paragon Park.

- Alternative 9 Modified includes a local interchange at Redlands Avenue to replace the local interchange previously proposed at Perris Boulevard.
- The following improvements to I-215 are included: (1) the addition of one auxiliary lane between the MCP/I-215 systems interchange and the adjacent service interchanges to the north and south to facilitate movement to/from the MCP and I-215; (2) the addition of an operational/mixed-flow lane from the MCP to the Van Buren Boulevard interchange to accommodate additional traffic on I-215 as a result of the MCP; (3) the addition of an operational/mixed-flow lane from Nuevo Road to the Cajalco-Ramona Expressway to facilitate weaving on I-215 (the previous Build Alternatives included collector-distributor roads and realignment of I-215 to accommodate weaving movements in this segment of I-215); (4) the addition of a new interchange at Placentia Avenue; and (5) modification of the existing interchange at the Cajalco Road/Ramona Expressway.

The comments received during the public review period for the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS are formally responded to in this Final EIR/EIS. Refer to Appendix S, Responses to Comments, for copies of the comments received on the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS and responses to those comments.

### 1.2.1 Funding and Programming

Table 1.2.A provides the cost estimate for the proposed MCP project.

**Table 1.2.A Cost Estimate for Alternative 9 Modified with the SJRB Design Variation (Preferred Alternative)**

<b>Cost Breakdown</b>	<b>Estimated Costs (\$ billion)</b>
<u>Right of Way</u>	<u>0.237</u>
<u>Roadway and Structures</u>	<u>1.013</u>
<u>Environmental Mitigation</u>	<u>0.100</u>
<b><u>Construction (Build Cost Subtotal)</u></b>	<b><u>1.350</u></b>
<u>Engineering</u>	<u>0.226</u>
<u>Construction Management</u>	<u>0.156</u>
<b><u>Total Cost</u></b>	<b><u>1.732</u></b>

Source: Final Project Report ((2015).

The Project Approval/Environmental Document phase of the MCP project, including the preparation of the Draft EIR/EIS and Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS, was funded with Riverside County Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee

(TUMF) funds and a federal streamlining funding allocation. Measure A designates funding to the CETAP corridors; MCP is one of four CETAP Corridors. As shown in Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) listing provided in Appendix K, funding for the Plan, Specifications and Estimate (PS&E), right of way, and construction phases of the MCP project is provided from local Measure A, bond, and TUMF revenues. The MCP schedule for start of construction is Fall 2016. Although the project is eligible for federal-aid funding, no federal funding is programmed in the 2015 FTIP.

The Mid County Parkway is recognized by Caltrans as a possible future State Highway and will be considered for adoption as such. Upon adoption of MCP as a state route, SR-74 from generally the same limits as MCP (from I-215 to SR-79) may be relinquished to the local agencies, subject to a future, formal agreement. The relinquishment would be an action of CTC resolution. SR-74 is an existing, west-east state highway located approximately 6 miles south of MCP.

The project is included in the financially constrained portion of the 2012 RTP and is listed as New Mid County Parkway (RIV031218). The following is the description for the project:

“IN WESTERN RIV CO – NEW MID CO PKWY: CONS 6 THRU LN (3 LNS IN EA DIR) APPROX 16-MI BTWN I-215 IN PERRIS EAST TO SR-79 IN SAN JACINTO, INC CONS/RECONS OF APPROX 10 ICS, ADD OF AUX LN REDLANDS – EVANS AND EB AUXILIARY LN EVANS – ANTELOPE. I-215 IMP: ADD 1 MF LN IN EA DIR NUEVO RD – VAN BUREN BLVD, & ONE AUX LN IN EA DIR MID CO PKWY – CAJALCO/RAMONA EXP AND FROM MID CO PKWY – NUEVO.”

The project is also included in the financially constrained 2015 Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) (including Amendments 1 and 2). The following is the revised programming description included in the 2015 FTIP:

“IN WESTERN RIV CO–NEW MID CO PKWY: CONS 6 THRU LN (3 LNS IN EA DIR) APPROX 16-MI BTWN I-215 IN PERRIS EAST TO SR79 IN SAN JACINTO, INC CONS/RECONS OF 13 ICS, ADD OF AUX LN REDLANDS–EVANS & EB AUXILIARY LN EVANS–ANTELOPE. I-215 IMP: ADD 1 MF LN IN EA DIR NUEVO RD–VAN BUREN BLVD, & ONE AUX LN IN EA DIR

MID CO PKWY–CAJALCO/RAMONA EXP AND FROM MID CO PKWY–NUEVO.”

Amendment No. 1 to the 2012 RTP was adopted by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) on June 6, 2013, and was found to conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) by FHWA and FTA on July 15, 2013. The 2015 FTIP was determined to conform to the SIP by the FHWA and the FTA on December 15, 2014. The design concept and scope of the MCP project is consistent with the project description in the 2012 RTP and the 2015 FTIP, and the open to traffic assumptions of SCAG’s regional emissions analysis.

## **1.3 Project Purpose and Need**

### **1.3.1 Project Purpose**

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide a transportation facility that would effectively and efficiently accommodate regional west-east movement of people, goods, and services between and through Perris and San Jacinto. More specifically, the selected Alternative would:

- Provide increased capacity to support the forecast travel demand for the 2040 design year;
- Provide a limited access facility;
- Provide roadway geometrics to meet state highway design standards;
- Accommodate Surface Transportation Assistance Act National Network trucks;<sup>1</sup> and
- Provide a facility that is compatible with a future multimodal transportation system.

As discussed in detail later in Section 1.3.2.6, Independent Utility and Logical Termini, the MCP project provides logical termini because it connects to two major north-south transportation facilities (I-215 and SR-79) independent utility because the project is usable and a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made, and does not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> These are larger trucks that are permitted on the federal Interstate system and the non-Interstate Federal-aid Primary System.

### 1.3.2 Project Need

The MCP project is located in an area of western Riverside County<sup>1</sup> that is currently undergoing substantial population and employment growth. According to the 2010 Census, the population in Riverside County is approximately 2.2 million people. Population in Riverside County overall is expected to increase to approximately 3.3 million by 2035 and employment is projected to increase to 1.2 million jobs by 2035.<sup>2</sup> In addition, according to the Inland Empire Quarterly Economic Report (January 2012), the Inland Empire, which includes the counties of Riverside and San Bernardino, experienced a 2 percent growth in employment from December 2010 to December 2011 indicating the region's recovery had begun following the 2008 recession.

Within western Riverside County, population is expected to increase by over 1.3 million people between 2010 and 2035, an increase of more than 60 percent. Growth in employment is expected to occur at an even higher rate, approximately 80 percent between 2010 and 2035, with an overall doubling of the number of jobs between 2003 and 2035.<sup>3</sup>

The following explain why the growth forecasts in the 2008 RTP were used in the project traffic analysis, how the growth forecasts changed from the 2008 RTP to the 2012 RTP, and the growth forecasts that were used in the traffic modeling for the MCP project:

- The 2008 RTP was the applicable RTP at the time the analyses for the Draft EIR/EIS and the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS were prepared. As a result, the growth forecasts used in the 2008 RTP were also used in the analyses for the MCP project.
- The 2008 RTP estimated the 2005 population in the SCAG region at 18.14 million residents and forecasted the 2035 population in the SCAG region (the

<sup>1</sup> Western Riverside County consists of 17 incorporated cities and portions of unincorporated Riverside County and is generally bounded by San Diego County to the south, Orange County to the west, San Bernardino County to the north, and the San Jacinto Mountains to the east.

<sup>2</sup> 2012 RTP Integrated Growth Forecast, Southern California Association of Governments. Website: <http://www.scag.ca.gov/forecast/index.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> 2008 RTP Integrated Growth Forecast, Southern California Association of Governments.

SCAG region includes all of Los Angeles, Orange, Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties) at 24.06 million residents, a forecasted increase of 33 percent between 2005 and 2035 and an estimated annual rate of growth of 1.2 percent.

- The 2012 RTP estimated the 2010 population in the SCAG region at 18.10 million residents and forecasted the 2035 population in the SCAG region at 22.09 million residents, a forecasted increase of 22 percent between 2010 and 2035. Although the rate of estimated growth is lower in the 2012 RTP than in the 2008 RTP, it still represents an estimated annual rate of growth of 0.9 percent over that time period.
- Although the rate of estimated growth in the 2012 RTP is lower than in the 2008 RTP, the RIVTAM traffic model, which was used to analyze the potential traffic effects of the MCP project, used an annual growth factor of 1.9 percent per year, which is consistent with the rate of growth for the western Riverside County area forecast in the 2012 RTP based on the growth forecasts provided to SCAG by the Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG) ([http://www.wrcog.cog.ca.us/downloads/WRCOG\\_Growth\\_Forecast\\_2010\\_2035.pdf](http://www.wrcog.cog.ca.us/downloads/WRCOG_Growth_Forecast_2010_2035.pdf)).

In 2040, the existing major west-east facilities in western Riverside County, SR-60 and SR-91, as well as several segments of SR-74, are projected to operate at level of service (LOS) F, even with planned improvements. Ramona Expressway is the only major, west-east, continuous transportation corridor located between SR-74 to the south and SR-60 to the north that provides a connection between I-215 and SR-79. Ramona Expressway currently operates at an overall LOS C with a maximum average daily traffic (ADT) of 27,500 vehicles in 2010. By 2040, it is projected, that even with planned improvements in the Riverside County General Plan Circulation Element,<sup>1</sup> Ramona Expressway will operate at an unacceptable LOS F, with an ADT of approximately 79,000 vehicles. The 2040 projections show a more than 100 percent increase in traffic demand through the corridor. Existing capacity is inadequate to meet the future traffic demand. A Travel Time Analysis (2010) concluded that the travel times on Ramona Expressway between I-215 and SR-79 in 2040 under existing conditions and existing conditions with General Plan Circulation Element planned improvements would be 93 minutes and 44 minutes, respectively.

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<sup>1</sup> Planned improvements include widening of Ramona Expressway to a 6–8-lane limited-access facility per the Riverside County General Plan Circulation Element.



Although currently funded transportation improvements will address some of the projected future demand, additional transportation improvements are needed to provide for the efficient movement of people and goods in this part of western Riverside County in the future.

### **1.3.2.1 Capacity, Transportation Demand and Safety**

#### ***Existing Capacity***

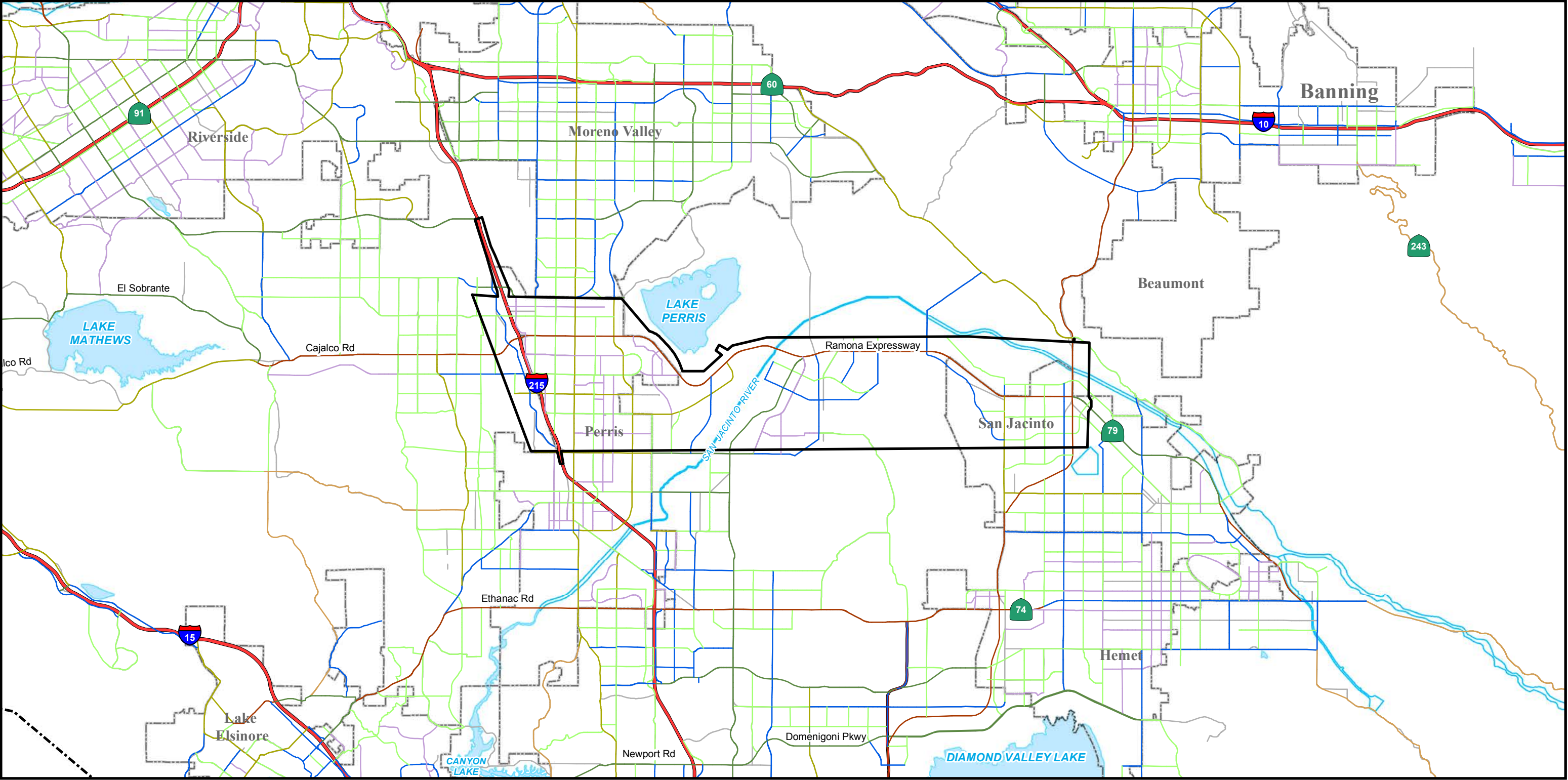
The existing major west-east facilities in western Riverside County consist of State Routes 60, 91, and 74 (SR-60, SR-91, and SR-74, respectively), and Interstate 10 (I-10); see Figure 1.3.1 for the existing circulation network. These facilities provide linkages between the major north-south facilities of I-15, I-215, and SR-79. In 2040, SR-60 and SR-91, as well as several segments of SR-74, are projected to operate at level of service (LOS) F. The previous Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore CETAP studies evaluated several alternatives along Ramona Expressway, Cajalco Road, and El Sobrante Road, as well as other alternatives to the south along portions of SR-74, Domenigoni Parkway, Ethanac Road, and Newport Road. While the Riverside County General Plan identifies several major alternative west-east arterials south of SR-74, Ramona Expressway is the only existing major, west-east, continuous transportation corridor located between SR-74 to the south and SR-60 to the north (see Figure 1.3.1, Circulation Element) that provides a connection between I-215 and SR-79. Ramona Expressway is a two- to six-lane expressway with partial access control; therefore, discussion of capacity, transportation demand, and safety focuses on Ramona Expressway.

#### ***Level of Service***

Although traffic congestion occurs during the peak hours at certain intersections, Ramona Expressway currently operates at an overall LOS C with a maximum of 27,500 average daily traffic (ADT) in 2010. By 2040, it is anticipated, even with planned improvements in the Riverside County General Plan Circulation Element, Ramona Expressway would operate at an unacceptable LOS F with approximately 74,900 ADT.<sup>1</sup> The 2040 projections show a more than 100 percent increase in traffic demand through the corridor. The existing capacity of Ramona Expressway is inadequate to meet the future traffic demand.

<sup>1</sup> Planned improvements include widening of Ramona Expressway to a six- to eight-lane limited access facility per the Riverside County General Plan Circulation Element.

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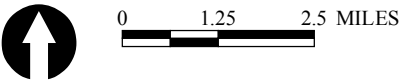


LEGEND

	Study Area		Major (118' ROW)
	County Boundary		Expressway (220' ROW)
	City Limits		Urban Arterial (152' ROW)
	Highways		Arterial (128' ROW)
	Major Roads		Secondary (100' ROW)
			Collector (74' ROW)

FIGURE 1.3.1

SOURCE: County of Riverside (2003); Jacobs Engineering (02/2011)



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### **Travel Time**

A Travel Time Analysis (2010) was conducted for the MCP project. The following assumptions were used to estimate existing and 2040 future travel times along the MCP corridor between I-215 and SR-79:

For existing conditions without any planned improvements, an average travel speed of 10 miles per hour (mph) was estimated based on LOS F conditions for an arterial street (Class II), using the Urban Streets methodology in the Highway Capacity Manual. If no capacity improvements are made to Ramona Expressway, LOS F is the expected operating condition in 2040.

- For existing conditions with General Plan Circulation Element planned improvements added, an average travel speed of 21 mph was estimated based on LOS D conditions for an arterial street (Class I), using the Urban Streets methodology in the Highway Capacity Manual. The assumption is that Riverside County (and cities along the corridor) will provide necessary widening to achieve LOS D operating conditions in order to meet the goals of their General Plan Circulation Elements.

The Travel Time Analysis concluded that the travel times between I-215 and SR-79 in 2040 under existing conditions and existing conditions with General Plan Circulation Element planned improvements, would be 93 minutes and 44 minutes, respectively.

### **Population/Traffic Forecast**

The MCP project would link the existing and growing population centers of the city of Perris and the city of San Jacinto. The city of Perris is currently served by I-215 in a north-south direction and SR-74 in a west-east direction. The city of San Jacinto is served by SR-79 in a north-south direction but is not served by a major west-east facility other than Ramona Expressway. In addition to linking communities in western Riverside County, the MCP project would link I-215 and SR-79, thereby facilitating regional traffic movement by providing a west-east connection to these major north-south transportation facilities.

Traffic modeling for the MCP studies is based on full implementation of the adopted Riverside County General Plan, as well as implementation of the General Plans for the surrounding cities, including planned land uses identified in the Land Use

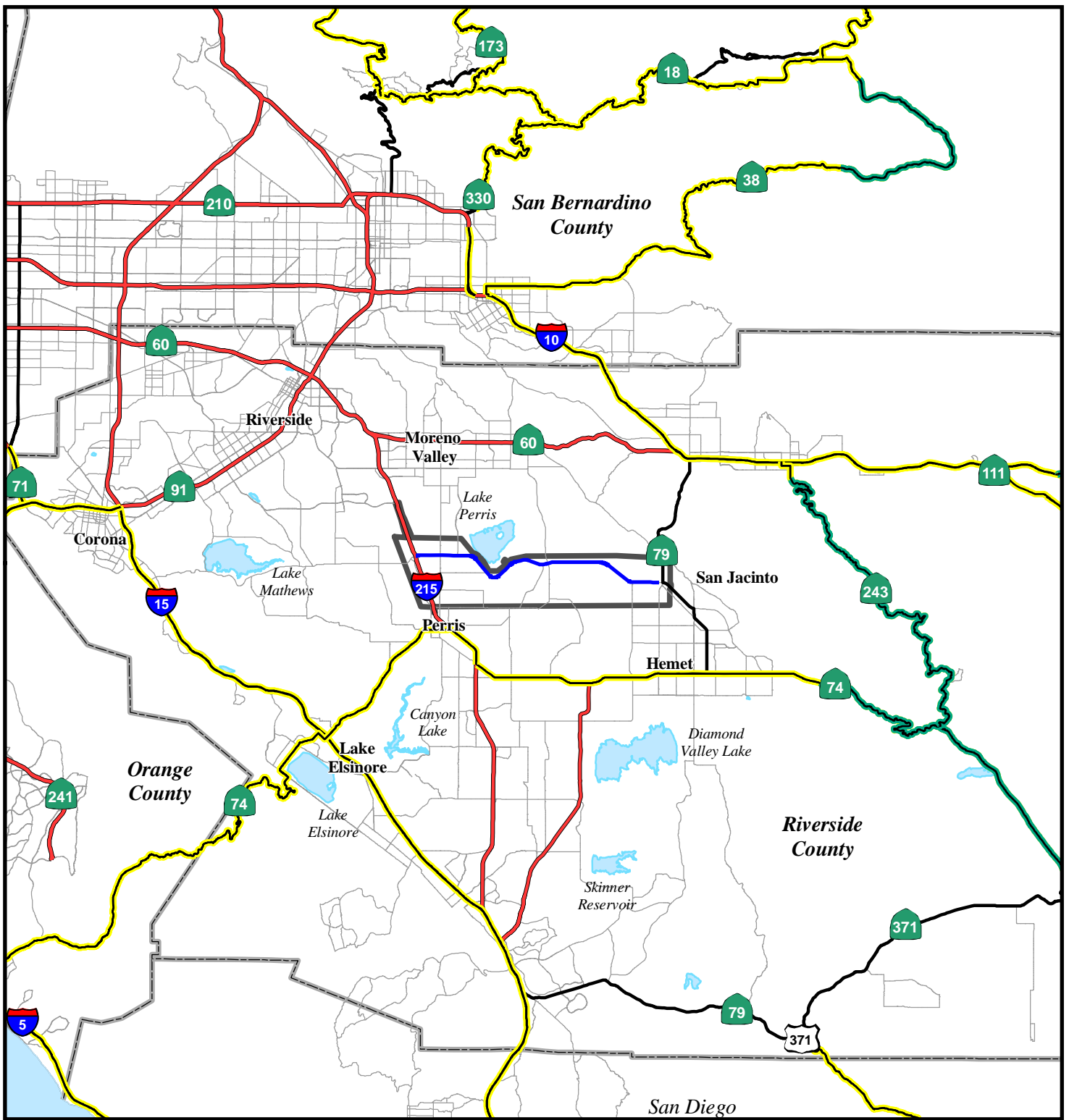
Element and planned transportation facilities identified in the Circulation Element.<sup>1</sup> Transportation modeling based on the adopted Riverside County General Plan land uses indicates that the LOS on west-east arterials will be degraded without implementation of the MCP project.

There is no established standard for the desirable distance between major transportation facilities, and there is currently a broad range of distances between the major west-east freeways as they intersect with I-215 in this area. For example, SR-91 and SR-60 are approximately 10 mi apart, SR-60 and I-10 are approximately 3.0 mi apart, and I-10 and State Route 210 (SR-210) are approximately 6.0 mi apart. SR-91 and State Route 78 (SR-78) (the closest west-east freeway south of SR-91 in southern Riverside County/northern San Diego County) are separated by approximately 62 mi. While SR-74 and State Route 76 (SR-76) (conventional highways located in San Diego, Orange, and Riverside Counties) provide some of the needed west-east capacity, they are limited by topographic and other constraints and will accommodate only limited additional growth in traffic. The MCP project is located approximately half-way between SR-74 and SR-60, or approximately 8 mi from each facility (see Figure 1.3.2, Freeways and Other State Highways).

The future transportation modeling for 2040 conducted for the MCP project included a base network that assumed the following: (1) implementation of the improvements included in the 2008 RTP for western Riverside County and Coachella Valley; and (2) implementation of the arterial roadway improvements included in the adopted Circulation Element of the Riverside County General Plan. The land use assumptions in the transportation demand model reflected the land use types and intensities included in the Land Use Element of the Riverside County General Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> County of Riverside General Plan (2003): <http://planning.rctlma.org/ZoningInformation/GeneralPlan/RiversideCountyGeneralPlan2003.aspx>; City of San Jacinto General Plan: <http://www.ci.san-jacinto.ca.us/city-govt/general-plan.html>; and City of Perris General Plan: <http://www.cityofperris.org/city-hall/general-plan.htm>.



#### LEGEND

- |                      |  |   |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Study Area           | Ramona Expressway  | Officially Designated State Scenic Highways |
| Freeways             | Eligible State Scenic Highways - Not Officially Designated |   |
| Conventional Highway |  |   |

FIGURE 1.3.2

SOURCE: ESRI (2006); DOT (2010); Jacobs Engineering (12/2011)



0 4 8 Miles

#### Freeways and Other State Highways

08-RIV-MCP PM 0.0/16.3; 08-RIV-215 PM 28.0/34.3  
EA 08-0F3200 (PN 0800000125)



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### **Capacity Needs**

SR-60 has three lanes in each direction from east of the I-215/SR-60 junction. The ability to expand capacity on SR-60 is severely restricted by existing development. Future capacity on parallel routes is also limited. Existing SR-74 has two to four lanes from Hemet to the I-15. The model assumes that SR-74 will be widened to eight lanes west of Ethanac Road. Even with planned expansion of both of these facilities, they will not be able to meet future west-east travel demand.

Ramona Expressway is expected to operate at unacceptable LOS in 2040. In addition, future traffic projections indicate all existing freeways will be operating at LOS F even with implementation of planned improvements as identified in the RTP, the Riverside County General Plan Circulation Element, the Measure A Expenditure Plan, and the implementation of transit “oases”<sup>1</sup> as identified in the Riverside County General Plan.

Traffic demand forecasts and modeling indicate that approximately 37 percent of the trips in the MCP corridor would be traveling the entire length of the corridor from I-215 to the SR-79/Sanderson Avenue area, indicating regional trips; 63 percent would travel within the corridor, indicating an origin and destination between the cities of Perris and San Jacinto. Based on this percentage of through trips, the MCP project would not only serve as a major arterial within the communities through which it passes, but would also provide a vital regional transportation role by serving longer trip lengths. Based on traffic model results for the 2040 conditions (with no MCP), approximately 60 percent of the westbound peak hour traffic on Ramona Expressway south of Lake Perris is destined for Perris, unincorporated areas north of Perris, and Moreno Valley. The remaining 40 percent of westbound traffic has a

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<sup>1</sup> The transit oasis is a concept to improve transportation options in Riverside County by providing an integrated system of local serving, rubber-tired transit that is linked with a regional transportation system, such as MetroLink or express buses. In the transit oasis concept, rubber-tired transit vehicles operate on a single prioritized or dedicated lane in a one-way, continuous loop. The transit oasis is designed to fit into community centers, which provide the types of densities and concentrated development patterns that can allow this concept to become a reality. A one-way loop, with stops within a 5-minute walk, can effectively serve about 1.5 square miles with 10-minute frequencies of service and require only a single vehicle and a single lane right-of-way. The transit oasis would be used by existing transit operators.

directional split of approximately 16 percent northbound on I-215, 23 percent westbound on Cajalco Road, and 1 percent southbound on I-215.

To serve the projected travel demand in this area, there is a need to maximize the capacity of the MCP project by limiting access. Access limitation is used to restrict entry onto highways to manage traffic congestion and improve traffic operational conditions. Access on Ramona Expressway is not currently restricted, with intersections (both signalized and unsignalized) and driveways providing multiple points of access onto the existing highway.

There is also a need for the MCP project to accommodate truck traffic, which will be integral to future job growth in the area because of the many existing and planned warehouse distribution facilities in Perris along I-215. The 1982 Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) allows large trucks to operate on the Interstate system, the non-Interstate Federal-aid Primary System, and certain primary routes (collectively referred to as the National Network). Caltrans has identified roadway design standards to provide for safe transportation of regional truck traffic, including STAA vehicles. Roadway design to accommodate these trucks must accommodate turning movements characterized by the rear tires following a shorter tracking path than the front tires. Currently, I-215 and SR-79 north of the MCP study area and south of SR-74 are included in the STAA National Network. The existing Ramona Expressway currently does not meet STAA standards. The MCP project would provide another west-east link for goods movement if it is designed to meet STAA standards.

### **Safety**

Summaries of the existing accident information for I-215 and Ramona Expressway are shown in Tables 1.3.A and 1.3.B, respectively. At some locations, accident rates on I-215 and Ramona Expressway exceed statewide averages. Some of the higher-than-expected accident rates are due to congestion and/or unsignalized intersections. I-215 accident rates were compared to statewide averages for similar types of facilities. Two of the locations show actual accident rates below the average accident rates for similar facilities while two locations show actual accident rates above the average accident rates for similar facilities. Analysis of accidents for the locations with higher than average accident experience showed no obvious accident pattern relative to the causes of accidents. Although not a defined purpose of the project, accidents would likely be reduced with implementation of the MCP project as a result of access limitation and improved highway design.

**Table 1.3.A Existing Accident Data on I-215 Mainline and Ramps: October 2009 through September 2012**

Facility	Location	PM	Actual Accident Rates <sup>1</sup>			Average Accident Rates <sup>1</sup>		
			Fatal	Fatal + Injury	Total	Fatal	Fatal + Injury	Total
<b>I-215 NB Mainline</b>	D Street to Nuevo Road	27.23 – 27.89	0.000	<u>0.10</u>	<u>0.27</u>	<u>0.005</u>	<u>0.28</u>	<u>0.87</u>
	Nuevo Road to Placentia Avenue	27.89 – 29.40	0.012	<u>0.18</u>	<u>0.39</u>	<u>0.004</u>	<u>0.24</u>	<u>0.77</u>
	Placentia Avenue to Cajalco/Ramona	29.40 – 30.93	<u>0.000</u>	<u>0.08</u>	<u>0.29</u>	<u>0.005</u>	<u>0.23</u>	<u>0.71</u>
	Cajalco/Ramona to Harley Knox	30.93 – 32.33	0.000	<u>0.10</u>	<u>0.28</u>	<u>0.005</u>	<u>0.25</u>	<u>0.76</u>
	Harley Knox to Van Buren Avenue	32.33 – 34.17	0.008	<u>0.11</u>	<u>0.41</u>	<u>0.006</u>	<u>0.27</u>	<u>0.80</u>
<b>I-215 SB Mainline</b>	Van Buren Avenue to Harley Knox	32.33 – 34.17	<u>0.000</u>	<u>0.10</u>	<u>0.41</u>	<u>0.006</u>	<u>0.27</u>	<u>0.80</u>
	Harley Knox to Cajalco/Ramona	30.93 – 32.33	0.000	<u>0.11</u>	<u>0.44</u>	<u>0.005</u>	<u>0.25</u>	<u>0.76</u>
	Cajalco/Ramona to Placentia Avenue	29.40 – 30.93	0.000	<u>0.10</u>	<u>0.24</u>	<u>0.005</u>	<u>0.23</u>	<u>0.71</u>
	Placentia Avenue to Nuevo Road	27.89 – 29.40	0.000	<u>0.16</u>	<u>0.50</u>	<u>0.004</u>	<u>0.24</u>	<u>0.77</u>
	Nuevo Road to D Street	27.23 – 27.89	0.000	<u>0.22</u>	<u>0.71</u>	<u>0.005</u>	<u>0.28</u>	<u>0.87</u>
<b>I-215/ D Street I/C</b>	SB Off Ramp	27.30	0.000	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.20</u>	<u>0.004</u>	<u>0.24</u>	<u>0.75</u>
	NB On Ramp	27.38	0.000	<u>0.21</u>	<u>0.42</u>	<u>0.003</u>	<u>0.14</u>	<u>0.41</u>
<b>I-215/ Nuevo Road I/C</b>	NB Off Ramp	27.68	0.000	<u>0.14</u>	<u>0.14</u>	<u>0.003</u>	<u>0.35</u>	<u>1.01</u>
	NB On Ramp	28.03	0.000	<u>0.23</u>	<u>0.56</u>	<u>0.002</u>	<u>0.22</u>	<u>0.63</u>
	SB Off Ramp	28.08	0.000	<u>0.22</u>	<u>0.66</u>	<u>0.003</u>	<u>0.35</u>	<u>1.01</u>
	SB On Ramp	27.70	0.000	<u>0.28</u>	<u>0.42</u>	<u>0.002</u>	<u>0.22</u>	<u>0.63</u>
<b>I-215/ Cajalco-Ramona I/C</b>	NB Off Ramp	30.77	0.000	<u>0.24</u>	<u>0.95</u>	<u>0.003</u>	<u>0.35</u>	<u>1.01</u>
	NB On Ramp	31.08	0.000	<u>0.06</u>	<u>0.93</u>	<u>0.002</u>	<u>0.22</u>	<u>0.63</u>
	SB Off Ramp	31.11	0.000	<u>0.31</u>	<u>1.68</u>	<u>0.003</u>	<u>0.35</u>	<u>1.01</u>
	SB On Ramp	30.76	0.000	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.63</u>	<u>0.002</u>	<u>0.22</u>	<u>0.63</u>
<b>I-215/ Harley Knox Boulevard I/C</b>	NB Off Ramp	32.14	0.000	<u>0.48</u>	<u>1.92</u>	<u>0.003</u>	<u>0.35</u>	<u>1.01</u>
	NB On Ramp	32.49	0.000	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.19</u>	<u>0.002</u>	<u>0.22</u>	<u>0.63</u>
	SB Off Ramp	32.55	0.000	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.17</u>	<u>0.003</u>	<u>0.35</u>	<u>1.01</u>
	SB On Ramp	32.20	0.000	<u>0.61</u>	<u>1.22</u>	<u>0.002</u>	<u>0.22</u>	<u>0.63</u>
<b>I-215/ Van Buren I/C</b>	NB Off Ramp	33.97	0.000	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.003</u>	<u>0.35</u>	<u>1.01</u>
	NB On Ramp	34.34	0.000	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.12</u>	<u>0.002</u>	<u>0.22</u>	<u>0.63</u>
	SB Off Ramp	34.37	0.000	<u>0.59</u>	<u>1.40</u>	<u>0.003</u>	<u>0.35</u>	<u>1.01</u>
	SB On Ramp	33.99	0.000	<u>0.20</u>	<u>0.39</u>	<u>0.002</u>	<u>0.22</u>	<u>0.63</u>

Source: Final Project Report (2015).

<sup>1</sup> Accident rates based on total number of **fatal** and **injury** accidents, as reported in Caltrans accident reports. Accident rates for mainline segments are expressed in accidents per million vehicle miles.

Accident rates for ramps are expressed in accidents per million vehicles.

I-215 = Interstate 215

I/C = interchange

NB = northbound

PM = post mile

SB = southbound

**Table 1.3.B Summary of Accident History, Ramona Expressway**

Roadway	Accident Category	Location	Fatality	Injury	Property Damage Only	Total
Ramona Expressway	Roadway Segment	Rider Street to Sanderson Avenue (2006–2008)	6	60	62	128
Ramona Expressway	Roadway Segment	I-215 to Rider Street (2003–2005)	4	40	78	122

Source: Final Project Report (2015).

I-215 = Interstate 215

Overall, while existing accident rates are not noticeably different from other similar facilities, there are locations along the existing route (Ramona Expressway) where design features (such as curves) and land use conflicts (including direct driveway access to the roadway) create conditions that could contribute to higher accident rates with the growth in traffic volumes on these two roadways. Further, it is not feasible to convert existing Ramona Expressway to a facility that meets Caltrans standards due to the roadway deficiencies discussed below. For these reasons, a need exists to establish an alternative transportation route that provides for limited access and is consistent with current State highway standards, thus resulting in an improvement in safety and a reduction in the potential for accidents.

### 1.3.2.2 Roadway Deficiencies (Ramona Expressway)

Existing Ramona Expressway is the only existing, continuous west-east highway in the MCP study area. There are limitations related to design and capacity that restrict the ability of the existing roadway to meet future travel demand.

#### ***Operational***

The existing Ramona Expressway design does not meet current Caltrans or Riverside County standards for major roadways. The 6th Edition of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual (dated 2006, updated 2012) identifies key design standards that will be applied in the design of the MCP project. Application of the Caltrans design standards represents a conservative approach, since these standards meet or exceed the design standards for Riverside County roads. Also, even if the MCP project is not designated a State highway in the future, compliance with Caltrans design standards will be required at the interchanges with I-215 and SR-79. These standards include a design speed of 75 mph, a minimum curve radius of 3,000 feet (ft), and a maximum vertical grade of 6 percent. The existing roadway geometry does not meet Caltrans standards for 75 mph in several areas; therefore, widening the existing facility in these areas without redesign is not feasible. Existing Ramona Expressway includes six horizontal curves that do not meet Caltrans standards.

Currently, there are numerous direct access points (driveways and local roadways) onto Ramona Expressway. These numerous access points result in the potential for conflict that impedes traffic flow. Uncontrolled access points reduce the overall capacity of Ramona Expressway and increase the possibility of accidents. Hence, the need for identifying appropriate access points from the federal and State highway system, as well as from local streets, and providing local access to existing and future development through the use of frontage roads or other solutions is necessary to improving operational deficiencies and overall safety.

### **1.3.2.3 Social Demands or Economic Development**

The MCP project was identified as a key west-east regional transportation corridor as a result of several years of comprehensive land use, habitat conservation, and transportation planning in Riverside County through the RCIP. Initiated in 1999, the RCIP was an unprecedented, multiyear planning effort to simultaneously prepare environmental, transportation, housing, and development guidelines for Riverside County for the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The purpose of the RCIP was to address the planning, environmental, and transportation issues that would result from the anticipated population growth in Riverside County. The RCIP included three components: (1) a new General Plan for Riverside County, adopted in October 2003; (2) an MSHCP for western Riverside County (approved by the County in June 2003 and by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] in June 2004); and (3) the CETAP through which the planning of four major transportation corridors was initiated, including what is now the MCP project. In addition, the RCIP Partnership Action Plan (September 2000) committed participating federal, State, and county governments to incorporate the western Riverside County Special Area Management Plan into all three RCIP planning efforts. The purpose of the Special Area Management Plan is to provide for comprehensive aquatic resource protection and reasonable economic growth (<http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/Media/Factsheets/tabid/1321/Article/477395/regulatory-program.aspx>). The United States Army Corps of Engineers issued a Notice of Intent to prepare a Draft EIS for the SAMP for the San Jacinto and Santa Margarita Rivers on December 26, 2002; however, the SAMP is no longer active per the USACE/Los Angeles District website (<http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/ProjectsPrograms.aspx>, accessed December 4, 2013).

The Circulation Element of the Riverside County General Plan acknowledges the concurrent CETAP planning efforts to identify preferred west-east and north-south

alternatives and preserve future right of way. The Circulation Element identifies Ramona Expressway as a future expressway of four to eight lanes.

The MCP project would fulfill the intent of the prior RCTC and County of Riverside actions with regard to the planning of the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore CETAP Corridor and is consistent with the intent of the Riverside County Circulation Element, which recognizes that the specific alignment decisions regarding the CETAP corridors may result in appropriate amendments to the General Plan. The MCP project provides a west-east transportation facility to support the planned land use envisioned in the Riverside County General Plan, and is being planned and designed in a way to further the conservation goals of the western Riverside County MSHCP.

The MCP project is also consistent with the goals of the Riverside County General Plan, which sets forth the need to incorporate future growth with transportation and multipurpose open space systems in areas that are well served by public facilities and services and preserve significant environmental features. The Riverside County General Plan also specifies the need to connect whole communities, which the MCP project would do by providing an improved west-east linkage between the cities of Perris and San Jacinto.

#### **1.3.2.4 Executive Order 13274 and County Sales Tax Measure *Executive Order 13274***

On September 18, 2002, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13274 titled “Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Reviews.” This order required transportation and natural, cultural, and historical resource agencies to establish realistic timeframes on environmental transportation documents, and required the agencies to work together to provide efficient review of the documents while protecting the environment. CETAP, of which the MCP project is a part, was one of the first seven projects to be placed on the national priority list for review under Executive Order 13274; however, because the NEPA process for the Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore CETAP Corridor never advanced beyond the Draft EIS, the MCP project is no longer considered an Executive Order 13274 project.

#### ***County Sales Tax Measure***

Riverside County voters approved Measure A in 1988. Measure A permits a half-cent sales tax program to be implemented to collect funding for transportation improvement projects in Riverside County. Measure A was set to expire in 2009;

however, in 2002 voters approved a 30-year extension for the sales tax program to 2039. The MCP project is one transportation project included in the RCTC list of projects that may receive funding under Measure A.

The RCTC may initiate future legislation to designate the MCP as a State highway.

### **1.3.2.5 Modal Interrelationships and System Linkages**

#### ***Modal Interrelationships***

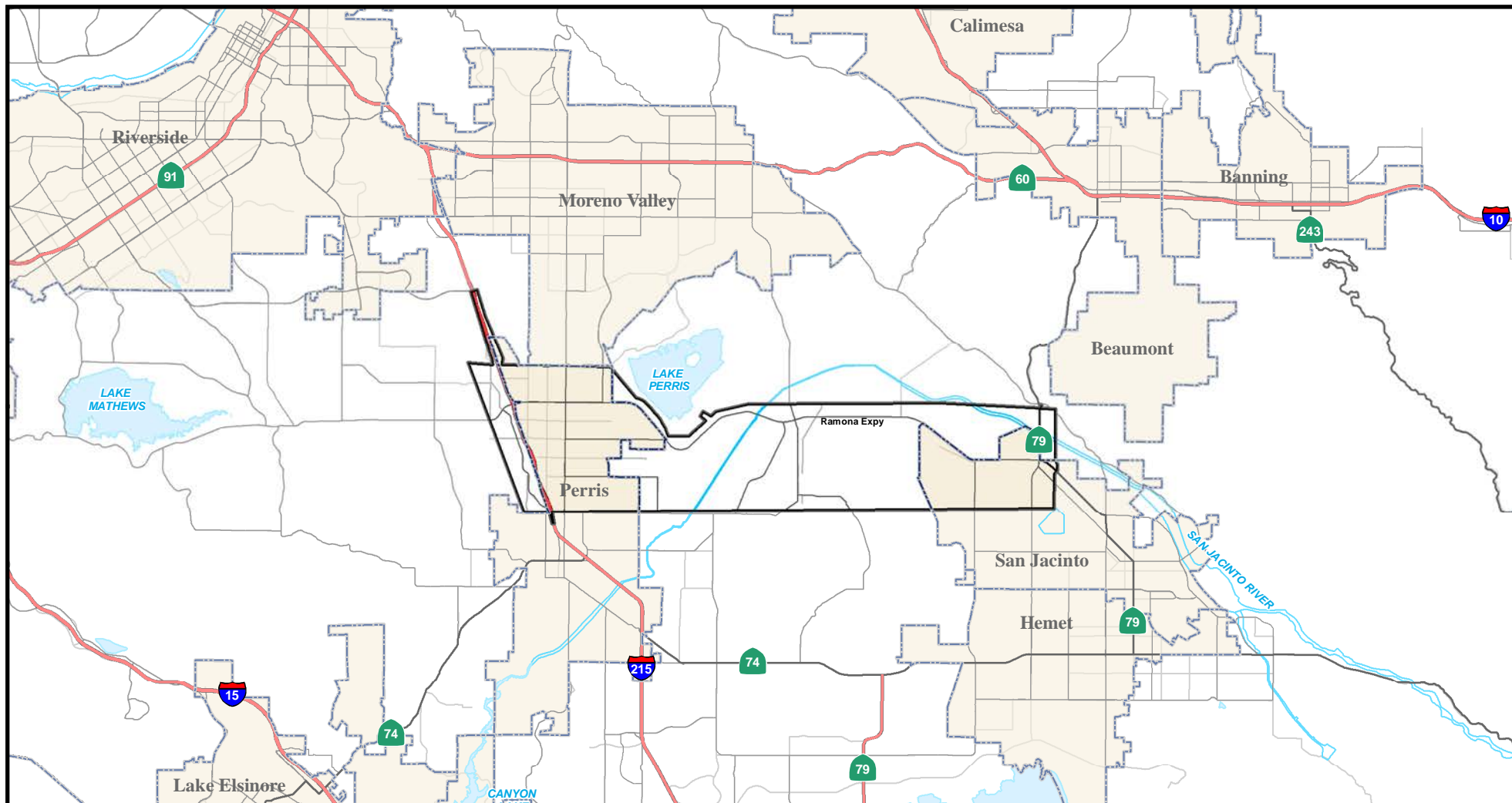
In addition to the rapid population growth in western Riverside County, the employment base is also increasing, particularly in intermodal goods distribution. Land planning and economic projections indicate that the Perris/Moreno Valley/March Air Reserve Base area will serve as a major distribution hub for goods in the Inland Empire.<sup>1</sup> This employment center will result in increased travel demand by commuters, as well as by trucks carrying goods in and out of the area. The MCP project is located within the future population and employment centers it would serve including the Perris/Moreno Valley/March Air Reserve Base area and San Jacinto (Figure 1.3.3, Jurisdictional Boundaries).

The location of the MCP project through the city of Perris offers an opportunity to create a linkage between the MCP project and two major planned transit projects (the Perris Valley Line and Perris Multimodal Facility). The proposed Perris Valley Line would provide commuter rail service from the city of Perris to the city of Riverside and areas west by extending existing service (Metrolink 91 Line) that links the city of Riverside with downtown Los Angeles via Fullerton. It is anticipated that the proposed Perris Valley Line would connect with the Perris Multimodal Facility located in downtown Perris off C Street and would provide for connecting bus (including the Riverside Transit Agency) and rail (including Metrolink) service. The Perris Multimodal Facility is in proximity to the MCP project. The Perris Valley Line will extend approximately 24 miles south from the existing downtown Riverside station to south of Perris. Four new stations will be constructed along the Perris Valley Line, the Riverside Hunter Park, Moreno Valley/March Field, Downtown Perris, and South Perris Stations. One additional station, near the I-215/Cajalco Road interchange, is proposed to be constructed along the Perris Valley Line in the future.

<sup>1</sup> According to the Riverside County General Plan Land Use Element, build out of the March Joint Powers Authority Planning Area will account for 21.5 million square feet of commercial and industrial development and up to 38,000 jobs.

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# LEGEND

- Study Area
- County Boundary
- City Limits
- Highways
- Major Roads

SOURCE: TBM (2010); Jacobs Engineering (02/2011)



0 2 4 MILES

FIGURE 1.3.3

## Jurisdictional Boundaries

08-RIV-MCP PM 0.0/16.3; 08-RIV-215 PM 28.0/34.3  
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By reducing travel time and traffic congestion in the MCP study area, the MCP project would help improve accessibility to stations serving the Perris Valley Line.

### **System Linkages**

For the last several decades, western Riverside County has served as a population center for commuters to jobs in Orange and Los Angeles counties, resulting in high levels of west-east travel demand. The major north-south transportation facilities in western Riverside County are I-215 and SR-79, and the major west-east transportation facilities are SR-91, SR-60, and SR-74. The SR-91/SR-60 corridor and SR-74 are 16 mi apart, with no other major west-east highway in between. The MCP project is located between the SR-91/SR-60 corridor and SR-74, and would provide another needed west-east corridor/connection to improve the regional transportation network and to meet future west-east travel demand.

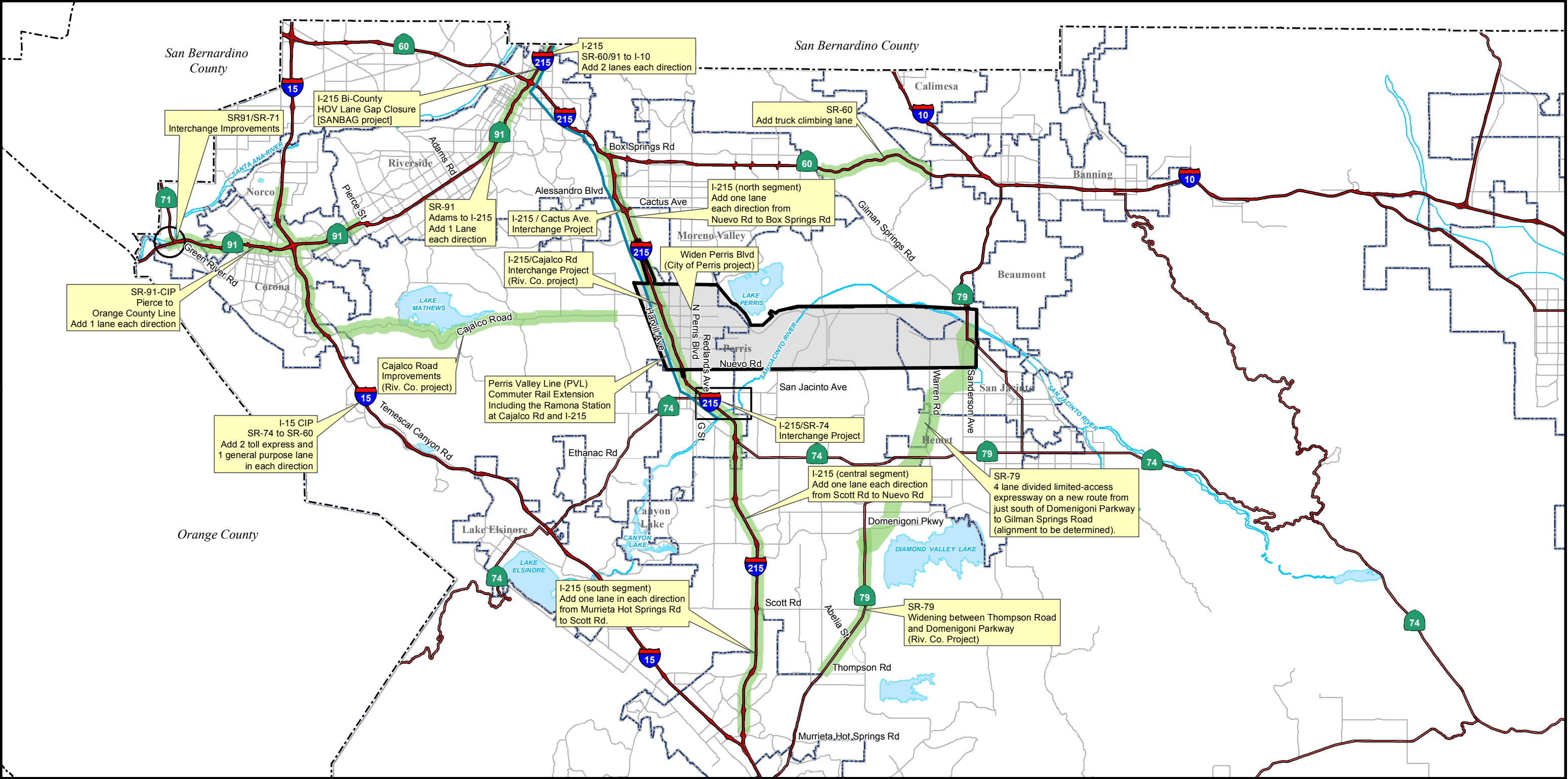
### **Related Projects**

Information concerning related projects provides contextual information for the MCP project and identifies how the transportation agencies have coordinated transportation planning efforts. There is a recognized need to ensure the MCP project will be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the programmed and planned improvements listed below. These related improvements are on facilities that represent future connections or are complementary to the MCP project.

The related transportation projects to the MCP project are depicted on Figure 1.3.4 and include:

- Constructing SR-79 as a Four-Lane Expressway:** SR-79 will be constructed as a four-lane divided limited-access expressway on a new route from just south of Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs. Preliminary engineering and environmental studies were conducted for several different alignments/alternatives for this SR-79 project. A Draft EIR/EIS was circulated for public and agency review and comment between February 8, 2013, and March 25, 2013. Additional studies were conducted on the project refinements to evaluate and assess environmental impacts, including traffic, air quality, land use, noise, and Section 4(f). The results of these additional studies will be included in a Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental EIS anticipated to be circulated for public and agency review in mid-2015. Based on the programming of funds in the 2015 FTIP, this project will be constructed before the MCP project. As a result, the potential effects of the SR-79/MCP Interchange have been considered in the

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LEGEND

	County Boundary		Highways
	City Limits		Major Roads
	Mid County Parkway Study Area		
	Related Projects		

FIGURE 1.3.4

SOURCE: TBM (2010); Jacobs Engineering (02/2011)



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- impacts of the SR-79 project and, therefore, are not also considered in the impacts of the MCP project.
- **SR-79 Widening:** SR-79 Interim Widening Project improved SR-79 between Thompson Road and Domenigoni Parkway by extending slopes between Thompson Road and Abelia Street, widening a 5.4 mi segment of SR-79 from two to four lanes between Abelia Street and Domenigoni Parkway, installing a painted center median, and constructing turn lanes at intersections. Construction was completed February 2014.
  - **Widening of I-215:** RCTC plans to widen I-215 from Murrieta Hot Springs Road in Murrieta to the I-215/Box Springs Road interchange in Riverside. The project is divided into three segments (south, central, and north). The south segment would add one mixed-flow lane in each direction from Murrieta Hot Springs Road in Murrieta to Scott Road north of Murrieta. Construction for the south segment was initiated in 2011 is now complete. The central segment would also add one mixed-flow lane in each direction from Scott Road north of Murrieta to Nuevo Road in Perris. Construction of the central segment began 2013 and is expected to be complete in 2015. The north segment proposes to add one lane in each direction from 1.3 mi south of Nuevo Road in Perris to 0.2 mi south of the I-215/Box Springs Road interchange in Riverside. The Project Approval/Environmental Documentation phase of this segment has not been initiated. This project is programmed in RCTC's Measure A Expenditure Plan.
  - **I-215/SR-74 Interchange Improvement Project:** RCTC recently completed construction of a new overcrossing structure to replace the existing SR-74 and I-215 interchange, as well as the reconfiguration of the 4th Street/Redlands Avenue intersection, widening of 4th Street (SR-74) between G Street and Redlands Avenue, widening of Redlands Avenue between I-215 and San Jacinto Avenue, and the construction of retaining walls and sound walls.
  - **I-215/Cajalco Road Interchange Improvement Project:** Construction was completed in late 2012 by the County of Riverside to improve the I-215/Cajalco Road interchange by widening the northbound and southbound off-ramps from two to three lanes, and widening Ramona Expressway between the northbound and southbound ramps to provide truck turning movements and accommodate one additional lane eastbound and westbound in the future.
  - **I-215/Cactus Avenue Interchange Project:** The City of Moreno Valley plans to widen the I-215/Cactus interchange from three to six through lanes, widen the ramps from one lane to two to three lanes (entry ramps include high-occupancy

vehicles [HOV]), and extend the northbound auxiliary lane between Alessandro Boulevard south to the Cactus Avenue northbound entry loop ramp.

- **I-215 Bi-County HOV Lane Gap Closure:** San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) is working with RCTC and Caltrans on construction of a project to add an HOV lane in both directions on I-215 between San Bernardino and Riverside. This 7.5 mi project extends from the Orange Show Road interchange in San Bernardino to the SR-60/SR-91/I-215 interchange in Riverside and crosses the cities of Colton and Grand Terrace. The Project Approval/Environmental Documentation phase was completed in 2011. Construction began in Fall 2012 and will be completed Summer 2015.
- **The Perris Valley Line:** The Perris Valley Line is a 24 mi extension of the Metrolink 91 Line. The extension begins at the existing Riverside-Downtown Station in the city of Riverside and proceeds north on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Line for approximately 3 mi before turning southeast along the San Jacinto Branch Line. The Perris Valley Line terminus is in the city of Perris at SR-74 and Ethanac Road. The project will include four stations upon the initiation of service. One additional station will be added in the future at Cajalco Road and I-215. The project is fully funded in the 2013 FTIP through construction. Construction of the project began in October 2013, and the project is expected to be completed by late 2015.
- **Cajalco Road Improvements:** The County of Riverside is currently in the planning stages to widen Cajalco Road from two lanes to four lanes between Harvill Avenue and Temescal Canyon Road. The project length is approximately 16 mi. The environmental document will be available for public review in 2016. Project approval is anticipated by early to mid-2017.
- **Perris Boulevard Improvements:** The City of Perris plans to widen Perris Boulevard from two to six lanes from Ramona Expressway to the Perris Valley Storm Drain. Construction began in late July 2014 and is anticipated to end by October 2015.
- **SR-60 Truck-Climbing Lane:** RCTC plans to add one truck-climbing lane in the Badlands area east of Moreno Valley. Construction is anticipated to begin in late 2016 and end in early 2019.
- **Widening of SR-91 from Adams to SR-60/SR-91/I-215 Interchange:** Caltrans plans to add one lane in each direction from Adams to the SR-60/SR-91/I-215 interchange in Riverside. The Project Approval/Environmental Documentation phase was completed in 2007, and construction is estimated to be completed in 2015.



- **Widening of SR-91 from Pierce Street to Orange County (SR-91 Corridor Improvement Project):** RCTC and Caltrans plan to widen existing SR-91 to include HOV lanes or express lanes, and general-purpose lanes from the junction of the SR-91/State Route 241 (SR-241) interchange in the city of Anaheim in Orange County to Pierce Street in the city of Riverside in Riverside County. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2014 and be completed in 2017.
- **State Route 91/71 Interchange:** RCTC and Caltrans plan to improve the connection between SR-91 and State Route 71 (SR-71) by replacing the existing single-lane connection between eastbound SR-91 and northbound SR-71 with a new, two-lane, direct flyover ramp, in addition to building a new, separate eastbound road just south of and parallel to SR-91 to provide improved access between the Green River Road interchange and the SR-91/SR-71 interchange.
- **I-15 Corridor Improvement:** RCTC and Caltrans plan to add two Toll Express Lanes and one general purpose lane in each direction from SR-74 to SR-60 and one HOV lane from I-215 to SR-74. The environmental document was circulated for public review in late summer 2014.

### 1.3.2.6 Independent Utility and Logical Termini

FHWA Regulation 23 CFR 771.111 defines logical termini for project development as “...rational end points for a transportation improvement, and have rational end points for a review of the environmental impacts...” The modified Build Alternatives extend approximately 16 miles between SR-79 and I-215 in western Riverside County, providing connections to north-south travel routes (SR-79 and I-215) while also providing an east-west travel route in the overall HCLE Corridor. With the modified MCP project, travelers in western Riverside County would have multiple options for traveling between SR-91 and SR-60 to the north and I-15 in San Diego to the south. The Tier 1 Draft EIR/EIS for the HCLE Corridor analyzed the potential environmental effects of a transportation corridor between I-15 and SR-79 in western Riverside County on a broad level; the Final EIR/EIS for the modified MCP project provides detailed analysis of the potential effects of the 16-mile-long facility through part of that larger study area, between I-215 and SR-79. As a result, the modified MCP project meets the definition of logical termini and is of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope.

It should be further noted that transportation facilities may have multiple logical termini. For example, a long road project may be constructed in phases where the first phase extends from one freeway-to-freeway interchange to either another freeway-to-

freeway interchange or a freeway-to-local street interchange. Shorter segments of projects can have logical termini if those end points represent “...rational end points for a transportation improvement, and have rational end points for a review of the environmental impacts...” as noted in FHWA Regulation 23 CFR 771.111. The logical termini for a shorter segment could be locations where there are a substantial change (increase or decrease) in traffic volumes and the shorter segment provides a transportation improvement that effectively addresses an identified need.

The modified MCP Build Alternatives meet the above definition of logical termini because they provide rational end points both for transportation improvements and for review of the environmental impacts of those transportation improvements.

FHWA Regulation 23 CFR 771.111 defines “...independent utility or independent significance...” to “...be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made...” As noted above, the modified MCP project would provide a usable facility that meets travelers’ needs for east-west and north-south travel in this part of western Riverside County even if no other improvements, such as improvements to Cajalco Road west of I-215, are implemented. Therefore, the MCP Build Alternatives would have independent utility/independent significance and would be usable and a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made.

FHWA Regulation 23 CFR 771.111 further requires that proposed transportation improvements “...not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements...” The modified MCP project would not physically affect the ability of improvements to be constructed west of I-215 (such as improvements to Cajalco Road) or on I-215 and SR-79 north or south of the MCP facility, or on local streets crossed by the MCP alignment or transit (bus or rail) pedestrian, or bicycle facilities in those areas. In addition, as shown on Figure 2.3.2, the typical cross section on the modified MCP would include three mixed-flow lanes in each direction, with 10-foot wide inside and outside shoulders. Those travel lanes would be sufficient to accommodate all types of buses including local transit vehicles. The cross section also includes a 62-foot-wide center median that could be used for high occupancy vehicle lanes, bus only lanes, additional mixed-flow lanes, or rail in the future. Therefore, the MCP Build Alternatives would not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.